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Thesis

Voltaire, His Ideas About Literature and Criticism

by

Edmund Myer McClosky, A.B.

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of the requirements for the
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Voltaire, His Ideas about Literature and Criticism
as found in his "Correspondance" from 1711-1753.



Voltaire at Forty



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Introduction

It is the purpose of this thesis to show Voltaire in his ideas about literature and criticism, as seen through a study made of his correspondence between the years 1711 and 1753, as well as any of the "Lettres Anglaises" which may be concerned with this topic. The paper will deal with his criticism of writers in particular, with his ideas concerning the art of writing in general, giving special reference to the theatre, and lastly, a summary and discussion of the topic as a whole.

No reference will be made to historical events which occurred during the period with which this thesis is concerned, and of which Voltaire made some comment in his letters. It is essential to keep in mind the actual facts connected with his ideas about literature.

A word is necessary in regard to the immense correspondence of Voltaire. It is a priceless collection for increasing one's acquaintance with the eighteenth century. There are about twelve thousand published letters, addressed to over seven hundred correspondents, personal friends, men of letters, political men, lords, magistrates, princes, kings and queens. This correspondence may be called the most complete record of Volterian expression, for in it

are united his almost universal curiosity, his remarkable wit, his great enthusiasm, his infatuations, and his animosities,--in other words, the man.

Because of his varied existence, unsettled, imprisoned, exiled, always on the move, achieving his triumphs in private life and at court, Voltaire was the very man capable of such voluminous correspondence. Gustave Lanson calls him the "idolâtré des libres penseurs, abhorré des croyants, le maigre vieillard au masque grimaçant, à l'ironie diabolique." # The correspondence might well be considered the newspaper of the day, and is the very best commentary on his own works. Certainly one finds a most complete picture of Voltaire in his letters, with the grace that comes only with the freedom he used in writing. One sees him in almost every possible mood. He shows his ability to be tactful when he wishes, and he knew how to write to everyone, just the tone to use, whether of flattery, advice, or of serious criticism, managing always to take into consideration the type of person to whom he was writing.

Quotation taken from G. Lanson: "Histoire de la Litterature Française." (Voltaire: p. 689)

Literary Ideas and Criticism in Particular

Very early in the published correspondence of Voltaire we find him making several attempts to defend his practice of criticism. He stated quite definitely that he did not approve of an authors' war. Instead of making enemies, writings should bind men closer together. His great love for literature and men of letters is seen in his own words: "Je ne suis pas comme la plupart de nos Parisiens; j'aime mieux avoir des amis que du superflu; et je préfère un homme de lettres à un bon cuisinier et à deux chevaux de carrosse." # He claimed that he had no prejudice for his own country, but that the fact remained that the French were the only ones willing to raise up monuments to the glory of men not necessarily born in their own country.

Voltaire made many allusions to the works of the classic writers. He admired the "Illiad" of Homer as a masterpiece of verisimilitude. He considered Homer as a sublime painter of people and conditions as they really were in his day. The "Aeneid" of Virgil, however, was the most beautiful monument of all antiquity. Voltaire even defended Virgil against those who said that he had plagiarized the writings of Homer. He was considered by Voltaire as quite superior to Homer.

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

In many instances Voltaire showed the influence of the classical writers. He firmly believed that the intelligence of one century owes its importance to the past centuries which have been the great preceptors. However, he stated that genius is the gift of God and that verse requires a correctness and precision which should frighten the most conscientious writers. He accounted for the great difference in genius when he wrote: "quiconque écrit en vers doit écrire en beaux vers, ou ne sera point lu. Les poètes ne réussissent que par les beautés de détail. Sans cela Virgile et Chapelain, Racine et Campistron ... seraient égaux." #

At one time when a French writer had attempted something in Latin, using more or less a mixture of the styles of Virgil, Terence, and Homer, Voltaire criticised him saying that although it was admirable to show a taste for the classic writers, he believed that a man who could write well should use his talent for writing French verse, employing his knowledge and love of the classic works to do honor to his country.

Voltaire loved poetry. He said that if a man could be acquainted with this great genre and not be moved by it, he was like a sick man who had lost one of his senses. He claimed that questions of poetry and eloquence should not be disputed. It was merely a question of taste and everyone had

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

his own. When his own writing bored another, he insisted that it would be actually impossible for him to prove to that person that it was not the fault of the writer, but rather that of the reader. However, in questions regarding history and philosophy, it would be reasonable to use common sense to convince others many times when they were willing to be attentive enough.

Voltaire often gave general ideas or rules concerning the writing of poetry in his time. He said that a just and noble thought was not sufficient to make for perfection in the writing of poetry. The manner of expression should be just as beautiful as it would be in prose. If verse, void of its rhyme and meter, were laden with superfluous words, if there were the least mistake in the construction, if suitable words were not used and in their rightful places, then perfection was not attained. One could be certain, that this kind of verse did not lend itself easily to memory, or to any extensive study. One should enjoy the freedom of his thoughts, but he should make certain that his work is very well regulated. Voltaire showed great respect for the language liaison, natural sequence of ideas, which facilitated reading. He argued that the natural is the "fruit de l'art", and the appearance of ease could come only with hard work. Very often one word out of place had spoiled the most beautiful thought in a poem.

Voltaire accounted for the weakness in French verse, and the seeming void of great ideas, as due to the phrases and rhyme in poetry. One should rhyme merely for the ear. Explaining this, he said that if a line ended with the word "terre", one usually found "guerre" to complete the rhyme. He believed that "père" or "mère" would rhyme just as well for the ear. This would remove obstacles and augment the possible beauty in verse. Although one should adhere to the rules, he should not become a slave to them. The weak style in all poetry could be seen where two lines were used without mixing the long and short, and without varying the meter. Too much rhyme and the use of too common expressions, the repetition of the same words throughout, and the failure to use the conjunctions, which, although they seemed unnecessary to the unadvanced writer, would contribute much to the elegance of discourse, were all necessary considerations in perfecting the art of writing poetry.

The critic believed that verses, as well as love, belong to youth. Racine was thirty-three when he completed his masterpiece, "Andromaque"; Corneille, thirty-five when he produced "Le Cid"; Virgil, forty when he wrote the "Aeneid". He himself was twenty years old when he began the "Henriade", and, although feeling he should have been at least thirty-five, it would have been pitiful if attempted at sixty.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket of the car's interior. I shivered as I walked towards the entrance of the building. The air was thick with the scent of old books and the sound of footsteps on the polished floor. I looked up at the grand facade of the library, its many windows reflecting the light of the day. I felt a sense of awe and wonder as I entered the vast halls of knowledge. The shelves were filled with books of all shapes and sizes, their spines worn and their pages yellowed with age. I walked through the aisles, my eyes scanning the titles. I found a book that caught my attention, its cover adorned with a picture of a man in a suit. I took it down and opened it, the pages turning like a fan. I read the first few pages, my mind racing with the ideas I encountered. The author's words were like a key, unlocking a world of possibilities. I closed the book and looked up at the ceiling, where the light from the windows shone down on me. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility, a moment of quiet reflection in the midst of a busy world. I walked back to the car, the book tucked under my arm. I looked back at the library one last time, its grandeur and beauty leaving a lasting impression on my mind. I knew that this was a place where I would come back again and again, to explore the depths of human knowledge and to find the answers to the questions that troubled me.

According to him, one could not be a poet in extreme old age. He renounced poetry, for this reason, at the age of forty-three, because he was tired of it, and because twenty-three years of this study had been enough. His advice to those spending the springtime of their youth with this art, was that the fall and winter of their life be devoted to interesting but different things.

When one reads the vast correspondence of Voltaire, one finds comment made upon many writers who are considered very important in the study of French literature. There are many writers mentioned, however, who are quite unimportant or irrelevant in this study.

An attempt will be made to discuss the various writers in connection with their particular genre, so far as this is possible. It will be necessary to consider the English men of letters, as well as those of Germany under separate divisions. Voltaire's conflict with Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, of which such an issue was made, will also form one division in this treatise.

Since it is practically impossible to mention every case which is handled in the letters of this prolific writer, this thesis will discuss a few of the more important

writers of the century in which he lived. It is possible, too, that many very important writers are neglected here, because actual mention and criticism was not made of them in the letters written during the years with which we are concerned at this time. It is certain also that such criticism as was made of some writers in these letters was not his complete opinion as to the merit of these literary men.

Voltaire mentioned the works of Pierre Bayle (1647-1706). He said that this author never ruined his style even when he was writing so rapidly on so many different subjects. He should have avoided a studied or a too highly painted style, but of course, a continued neglect in serious writings would not be tolerable. Voltaire has characterized him as a bit careless at times while most admirable elsewhere. No man is without fault, and even Racine, so admired by Voltaire, made, according to him, slight mistakes in expressions of good taste. In speaking of the works of Bayle, which he criticized so slightly, Voltaire claimed that there is much difference between the followers of a prominent man finding faults in one they love, and the sworn enemies who would try to ruin not only one's good reputation but his good philosophy as well.

La Fontaine (1621-1695) is one of the few men whom Voltaire praised highly. He believed that this poet was blessed with an almost divine instinct. When using this word

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The seventh part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The eighth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The ninth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself. The tenth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language itself.

instinct to characterize the work of La Fontaine, he meant genius. He said that if one were to have the opportunity to enter into conversation with him, his very discourse gave the evidence of a character so simple, that it was not difficult to understand why he was able to make animals talk so easily and to be so convincing.

In making a criticism or rather judgment of Boileau (1636-1711), Voltaire said this writer was not strong enough. One could not find any trace of the sublime; he lacked a brilliant imagination. Voltaire believed that he did very well all that he could or what he wished to do. He put reason into harmonious verse and was clear, easy, and happy in his transitions. His subjects lacked the elevation seen in the works of many others. He was sensible of his own talent, however, and his ideas, although never brilliant, were never disfigured. Even though not an eminent artist, according to Voltaire, Boileau did write correctly. The critic mentioned the satires of this writer which were superior to those of others of his day, but he went on to state that these satires were not his best works. The one generous compliment he paid to Boileau was when he connected his name with that of Racine saying they were the only writers of their day to be rich in color and who were faithful to nature. They said what they wished, but never

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It then proceeds to a literature review, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting, and the results were compared with those of previous studies. The findings of the study are consistent with those of previous studies, and they provide new insights into the phenomenon being studied. The implications of the study are discussed in detail, and the authors conclude that the study has contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The authors would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the study: [names]. The study was supported by the following grants: [grant numbers].

sacrificed the harmony and purity of the language. Voltaire said Boileau was not always enjoyed by some, because his works were filled with true imagery, and with humorous, familiar bits to lighten the serious tone and to vary the monotony. Voltaire declared that one should take care lest a taste for uniformity of sentiment allow him to be led away from the very ideas which had caused literature to flourish for years. One needs the comic element in comedy, gay pictures in letters to avoid emptiness and boredom.

Fénelon (1651-1715) is another important writer who received the attention and mention of Voltaire. This author condemned French poetry. Voltaire, in defense, said this was merely because Fénelon could write only in prose himself. He had, according to Voltaire, no knowledge of rhythm or of the finesse which varies the meter in verse. When he and his followers claimed that French verse was monotonous, Voltaire said the monotony was in their own prose writings. Fénelon was admired, however, for his superb style. Voltaire stated that although there was no variety in his works, there was a certain harmony and sweetness, the naive and pleasant painting of the agreeable things.

It is interesting to note how often Voltaire made a severe criticism of a writer and then very soon after was known to praise him highly or to defend him against the criticism of others. This was so in the case of the illus-

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. This includes both traditional manual methods and modern digital technologies, highlighting the benefits of each approach.

3. The third part focuses on the role of the management team in overseeing the data collection process. It stresses the need for clear communication and coordination between different departments to ensure that data is collected consistently and accurately.

4. The fourth part discusses the challenges faced during the data collection process, such as incomplete data or discrepancies between different sources. It provides strategies to address these challenges and ensure the integrity of the data.

5. The fifth part concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It reiterates the importance of a systematic and transparent approach to data collection and analysis, and encourages ongoing monitoring and improvement of the process.

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trious Fontenelle (1657-1757). In his criticism, Voltaire charged him with always striving at witticism. He said one could always see him instead of his heroes, and that these characters were made to say just the opposite of what they should say. Voltaire accused him of merely wishing always to shine, which he did; but, for the very lack of truth which appears in all he presents, one tires after reading his works for any length of time. On another occasion, Voltaire praises Fontenelle for being able to make things appear nice while other philosophers were unable even to make them clear. He claimed that men of letters often become the target for the scorn of fools. Such he considers the case where Fontenelle became the object of satire which, in his opinion, resembles the baneful criticism of a servant of his master. After fifty years of service in the Academy, Fontenelle delivered a "Discours" which Voltaire did not consider excellent, but, giving credit to the age of the writer, he wrote: "heureux qui fait des choses médiocres à quatre-vingt-cinq ans passés." #

Voltaire mentioned two works of Montesquieu (1689-1755). The first was his "Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence." Voltaire said he had treated a serious sujet too lightly. The work was really an ingenious "table des matières," written in a most

Quoted from Volume IV Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

peculiar style. In order to have enlarged upon the topic he would have needed more liberty. Voltaire often expressed his regrets that the freedom of expression so greatly enjoyed in England was not at all possible in France. Of the "Lettres Persanes," the second work mentioned by Voltaire, he expressed the thought that they were full of frivolous imagination. The real merit of this work could be attributed to the virility and force of its style.

In several of his letters, Voltaire mentioned Helvétius (1715-1771), a writer whose name is not so generally known as are those of the other men of letters under discussion. He had composed a certain "Epître sur l'amour de l'étude." Voltaire averred that this work was full of strong reasoning, much better than many attempts of the cowardly and timid authors of his day, who wrote merely for the book stores, and who feared the censors who were even more timid than they and envious as well. Voltaire liked this work for its masculine genius and its sparkling imagination. He believed it better to make a few mistakes, as did this writer, than to have described mediocre beauty, as was expected. Helvétius had been influenced by the style of Boileau and Corneille in correcting his verse. This pleased Voltaire. He saw in him an unusual talent for pleasing others, which is much more important than being admired. He was a real poet philosopher, possessing the genius most needed by men of letters.

In his correspondence we find proof of the fact that Voltaire was greatly influenced by his acquaintance with English writers. He wrote many letters in praise of these literary artists, and also much concerning his exile and stay in England. He was most impressed by the ideas of freedom of thought, which seemed so prevalent in England at that time.

With regard to the growing tendency towards the cultivation of philosophy, Voltaire hoped it would not become a "tyran qui exclut tout le reste". # He believed literature and science should go hand in hand, and should be cultivated together. He admired Newton and made quite a detailed study of his theories. This scientist was considered by Voltaire the French Christopher Columbus, who had led them to a new world with his many discoveries in physics. During the long stay at Cirey, Voltaire had a better opportunity to study and to appreciate the works of Newton, for his mistress, Madame du Châtelet, was an ardent student of science, and wrote a treatise on Newton and his theories. Voltaire praised her work very highly, considering it a masterpiece which honored both her sex and her country.

Another Englishman, whose works and friendship had made some impression upon Voltaire, was Swift. Of this writer's masterpiece, "Gulliver's Travels", the critic wrote that it

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

could be considered the Rabelais of England without the necessary confusion and nonsense of Rabelais. He admired this work for its imagination and lightness of style, even though it satirized the human race. Voltaire criticized the second volume as less interesting, because it pertains to England, and seems rather indifferent to France and the other nations. He remarked that the reader would probably tire of the wild inventions. The unnatural pleases for a time, but nearly always a second part or a continued recital of most romances is insipid.

Before leaving the discussion of this famous work of Swift, it is well to note how very much of the material was taken from Rabelais. The masterpiece is really nothing more than a reflection of the "Gargantua" and "Pantagruel" of Rabelais.

It is generally known that Voltaire admired Pope, but, in the particular letters that concern this thesis, very little mention was made of him. Voltaire acclaimed his "Essai sur l'homme" a fine poem in English, although filled with false ideas on happiness. Voltaire criticized all the writings of Pope for being loaded with obscurities, but he said that these very obscurities were filled with many bright spots, definitely inspired by a brilliant imagination.

In a letter to Madame Denis, Voltaire mentions Pope. "Un véritable homme de lettres est toujours en danger d'être

mordu par des chiens, et mangé par ces monstres (the critics). Demandez à Pope; il a passé par les mêmes épreuves; et s'il n'a pas été mangé, c'est qu'il avait bec et ongles. ... Ce monde-ci est une guerre continuelle; il faut être armé, mais la paix vaut mieux." #

In one of the "Lettres Anglaises," Voltaire was favorably impressed by Pope, whom he designated as the most elegant, correct, and harmonious writer in England. He said he would not compare unfavorably with Boileau. ## It is a question in my mind whether or not he really thought so much of Boileau. Personal letters were not so flattering with regard to the works of Boileau. This merely goes to show how difficult it is to know just when Voltaire is being truthful and sincere, or tactful and insincere.

Much mention was made of Shakespeare in the letters of Voltaire. This really has more bearing on the theatre, the discussion of which follows later, but in speaking of England, it would be impossible to fail to consider this poet. On first reading his plays and seeing them produced on the stage, Voltaire admired them profoundly. There is no doubt of the influence he felt through acquaintance with these masterpieces of literature and drama. But when Letourneur, in 1759, published a translation of Shakespeare, Voltaire became quite indignant. In his conceit, he believed this man had given

Quoted from Volume VI Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

"Lettres Anglaises"(22)

to France all that was of any value in Shakespeare; and what is even more amusing, all which he believed they should have of his influence.

When Voltaire saw the effect the masterpieces of Shakespeare were having upon others, he quite suddenly took a very different attitude toward this writer and his works, criticizing them very severely. He even attempted personal slander in a discourse written to the Academy, in which we find Shakespeare mentioned as a "sauvage ivre", one whom he had once considered the Corneille of London.

With the discussion of England, it is essential to include a work of Voltaire, to which a reference has already been made, and which was much considered, not only in the correspondence, but in the writings of many others at the time. This was the "Lettres Anglaises", often referred to as the "Lettres Philosophiques". These letters, based upon the customs and literature of England were written by Voltaire for a life-long friend of his named Thiérot, to whom, also, were addressed a great many of the letters published with his correspondence. They were composed with the idea that one day they should be published. Written in 1727-1728, they were later corrected and combined as one work in 1729. It was the wish of Voltaire to keep them from being published until a more propitious time. He claimed that the attempt would no doubt be more appreciated after

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his death. When the English translation appeared in London in 1733, Voltaire wrote: "C'est une chose assez plaisante que la copie paraisse avant l'original: j'ai heureusement arrêté l'impression du manuscrit français, craignant beaucoup plus le clergé de la cour de France que l'Eglise anglicane." # Because of his criticism of the church and his preaching of tolerance in religious affairs, Voltaire stated that, although considered tolerant by the English, he was accused of being an atheist by the French, who, according to him, did not allow one to think humanely.

In all, there are twenty-four letters, mostly dealing with religion, industry, philosophy, and government; of the rest which are concerned with literature, only four have any bearing on the purpose of this thesis, and therefore, mention will be made of them throughout, in connection with the particular aspect of each.

When one reads the correspondence of Voltaire during that period of his life, when he was the friend of Frederick the Great of Prussia, it is not difficult to see how these letters were very nearly a diary, in which one can easily visualize the relationship between these two men.

For a long time, Frederick had been trying to persuade Voltaire to live with him at the court in Berlin. While Voltaire was happy at Cirey with his beloved mistress, Madame

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

du Châtelet, he refused the invitation of the king. In 1749, when Madame du Châtelet died, Voltaire's letters became filled with sadness. He wrote of her in a letter to his friend d'Argental: "Je meurs dans ce château; ... j'y remplis mon devoir avec le mari et avec le fils. Il n'y a rien de si douloureux que ce que j'ai vu depuis trois mois, et qui s'est terminé par la mort." # And to another he wrote: "Mon cher enfant, une femme qui a traduit et éclairci Newton, et qui avait fait une traduction de Virgile, sans laisser soupçonner dans la conversation qu'elle avait fait ces prodiges; une femme qui n'a jamais dit du mal de personne, et qui n'a jamais proféré un mensonge; une amie attentive et courageuse dans l'amitié; ..." #

In these and many other letters, Voltaire gives proof of his love for his mistress. He finally decides to go to the court, in spite of the miserable state of his health. We find these words written to a friend in Paris: "Il n'y a au monde que Frédéric le Grand qui pût me faire entreprendre un tel voyage. Je quitterais pour lui mon ménage, mes affaires, Mme Denis; et je viendrais, en bonnet de nuit, voir cette tête couverte de lauriers. Mais, mon cher enfant, j'ai bien plus besoin d'un médecin que d'un roi." #

His stay with Frederick was most eventful. In the beginning, Voltaire was very happy. He described the wonders

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

and joys of the court in many letters. His descriptions were most enthusiastic. "Un carrousel composé de quatre quadrilles nombreuses, carthaginoises, persanes, grecques et romaines, conduites par quatre princes qui y mettent l'émulation de la magnificence, le tout à la clarté de vingt mille lampions qui changeront la nuit en jour; les prix distribués par une belle princesse, une foule d'étrangers qui accourent à ce spectacle, tout cela n'est-il pas le temps brillant de Louis XIV qui renaît sur les bords de la Sprée?"#

Many of the letters to Frederick himself are very friendly, giving him such literary advice as Voltaire was so capable of doing. Those written about Frederick to others were not always so kindly inspired. Reference is made here in particular to the letters at the time when Voltaire was tiring of his stay in Berlin. He felt that the only reason he had been tolerated at court was that Frederick wished to use him as much as possible and then to discard him as one would a toy. A quotation from the famous letter of the "mais" will be helpful to illustrate this gradual change or awakening in the attitude of Voltaire. ".... il y a ici du plaisir? Tout cela est vrai; ... mais ... les soupers du roi sont délicieux, on y parle raison, esprit, science; la liberté y règne; il est l'âme de tout cela; point de mauvaise humeur, point de nuages, du moins point d'orages. Ma vie est

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

libre et occupée; mais ... mais ... opéras, comédies, carousels, soupers à Sans-Souci, manoeuvres de guerre, concerts, études, lectures, mais ... mais ma chère enfant, le temps commence à se mettre à un beau froid." #

Voltaire's letters regarding their quarrel were very bitter and resentful, and showed that it was better to keep the friendship of such a person, rather than to submit to the persecution which was his because of the great weapon of sarcasm he could summon at any time.

Voltaire was asked by Frederick, in the early days of their friendship to correct some of his many poetic attempts. During these early days of their acquaintance, Voltaire did criticize and correct these works and for the most part the criticism was very favorable. The reader might often wonder as to the sincerity of Voltaire, for some of that criticism sounds rather more like flattery coming from one like him. Was this his scheme to get the popularity which he did gain with the king? At one time Voltaire called him the "vrai roi philosophe", who could think heroically but who lived simply and knew not the need of the superfluous. He said that in his works everywhere were the "étincelles d'imagination." He believed that Frederick showed great intellect in his power to reason. He could sense the beauties of French and Latin writings and "il entend l'art de s'exprimer

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

autant que celui d'être heureux dans toutes les situations."#

Frederick wrote at one time an "Ode sur la Flatterie." Voltaire was surprised that a prince would write against flattery. He told Frederick that Louis XIV would never have done so. When he wrote in favor of this work of Frederick, he begged him not to take his praise for flattery, assuring him that he admired his handling of the topic.

Whenever Voltaire did give an unfavorable criticism of Frederick's efforts, he either began by praising another part of the work or finished by praising the entire work as a whole. He spoke of the "Philosophe guerrier", of Frederick, which he said was written by one who showed great powers of reason and imagination in spite of the slight mistakes in language and versification. And even after much criticism, he concluded by saying that Frederick had remarkable genius.

Voltaire liked to make his own country recognize the real value of the masterpieces of other countries. He gave Frederick credit for his many constructive criticisms of his own tragedy "Mérope", declaring that it might well have been written in collaboration with Frederick. He even planned to dedicate this work to Frederick, but conveniently forgot his promise. This and the many other instances of

Quoted from Volume III Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

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conduct of this kind are the things which make us doubt the sincerity of Voltaire.

Many letters were written to Frederick containing various kinds of advice. He told him that to build correctly he must allow the arts to flourish, painting, sculpture, engraving, architecture, as well as literature. Frederick was admired for encouraging the liberty of thinking, which, according to Voltaire, should aid any century to become one of philosophers.

In his letters to Mme. Denis, Voltaire confided much with regard to his feelings during those last months of his stay at the court of Frederick. An excellent example of the many instances of his complaining is found in the following extract: "il m'avait fait arrêter pour ravoir son livre imprimé de poésies, dont il m'avait gratifié, et auquel j'avais quelque droit; il me l'avait laissé comme le gage de ses bontés et comme la récompense de mes soins. Il a voulu reprendre ce bienfait; il n'avait qu'à dire un mot, ce n'était pas la peine de faire emprisonner un vieillard qui va prendre les eaux. Il aurait pu se souvenir que de plus de quinze ans, il m'avait prévenu par ses bontés séduisantes, qu'il m'avait dans ma vieillesse, tiré de ma patrie, que j'avais travaillé avec lui deux ans de suite à perfectionner ses talents; que je l'ai bien servi, et ne lui ai manque en rien, qu'enfin il est bien au-dessous de son

rang et de sa gloire de prendre parti dans une querelle académique, et de finir, pour toute récompense, en me faisant demander ses poésies par des soldats." #

After the disillusionment of Voltaire, it was not long before he realized that the friendship with Frederick was at an end. He wrote again to Mme. Denis that the king had been aroused to jealousy, and had remarked to another: "J'aurai besoin de lui encore un an tout au plus; on presse l'orange, et on en jette l'écorce." ## This bothered him very much. He later wrote: "Je rêve toujours à l'écorce d'orange; je tâche de n'en rien croire, mais j'ai peur d'être comme les cocus, qui s'efforcent à penser que leurs femmes sont très-fidèles. Les pauvres gens sont au fond de leur coeur quelque chose qui les avertit de leur désastre." ##

Even after the treatment he had received, feeling so bitter toward Frederick, Voltaire hoped the king would not forget all that their friendship had meant. Illustration is offered once more from a letter concerning Frederick. "Ma seule consolation est que le souverain qui remplit la fin de ma vie d'amertume ne peut pas oublier entièrement des bontés si anciennes et si constantes. Il est impossible que son humanité et sa philosophie ne parlent tôt ou tard

Quoted from Volume VI Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

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à son coeur, quand il se représentera qu'il m'a daigné appeler son ami pendant seize années, et qu'il m'avait enfin fait tout quitter pour venir auprès de lui. Il ne peut ignorer avec quels charmes je cultivais les belles-lettres auprès d'un grand homme qui me les rendait plus chères." # And then he made a statement crediting Frederick with the genius he really believed he had. "C'est une chose si unique dans le monde de voir un prince né à trois cents lieues de Paris écrire en français mieux que nos académiciens; c'était une chose si flatteuse pour moi d'en être le témoin assidu, qu'assurément je n'ai pu chercher à m'en priver." #

Before leaving the discussion of the German writer, it would be well to mention Johannes Wolff, whose name appears quite often in the letters written between Frederick and Voltaire. The latter admired Wolff for his vast and precise knowledge, his method and finesse. He encouraged Frederick in the protection of Wolff, and praised his philosophical opinions in regard to his contributions to literature and philosophy. Mention was made in particular to the "Logique" of Wolff, which Voltaire favorably criticized. So enthusiastic was he about this writer, one might easily be led to ask once more to what extent he could be sincere in his

Quoted from Volume VI Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

The first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The second is the fact that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the various parts are constantly changing and evolving. The third is the fact that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The fourth is the fact that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The fifth is the fact that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion. The sixth is the fact that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The seventh is the fact that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the various parts are constantly changing and evolving. The eighth is the fact that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The ninth is the fact that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The tenth is the fact that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion.

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praise. He said it was impossible for one having such clear-cut and concise ideas ever to do anything wrong. It is not difficult to detect a note of insincerity in many of the high-sounding praises written by him when in one of his better moods.

It is essential to discuss somewhat the conflict between Voltaire and Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (1670-1741), for one finds throughout the correspondence so much allusion made to their antagonism. Perhaps one needs to study both sides of the question to make any comparison, but this discussion will be limited to the point of view of Voltaire as found in his letters. In his own words he declared Rousseau to be "un homme que je méprise infiniment comme homme, et que je n'ai jamais beaucoup estime comme poëte." # Voltaire asserted he had only a certain talent for detail, and was a workman rather than a genius,—"ce forger de rimes recherchées." ##

Voltaire said that Rousseau's satire in verse was hard and forced. Voltaire claimed he despised satire. He mentioned the work of this writer, the "Ode à la Postérité," of which he said posterity would never know anything, for even the present time had forgotten it completely.

The criticism made of Rousseau in his writing was that

Quoted from Volume II Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

his style lacked the influence of writers such as Marot, Rabelais, and others. His verses were flat. Voltaire even said that whenever one found a bit of bad verse, he might be sure it had been written by this poet. The hatred expressed throughout the entire portions of his correspondence which discussed Rousseau was very deeply rooted.

When the student knows more of the background of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, he learns that most of his works were salacious, and that he was finally forced to flee from France and to spend the rest of his days in exile, because he carried to extremes this type of writing. One can hardly blame Voltaire for the disgust he showed when writing against this man and his works.

Voltaire used the "Enfant Prodigue" as a reply in part to some of the impertinent letters of Rousseau. The critic was opposed to the tendency of this writer to give rules to the theatre. He stated that comedy should unite interest and pleasantry, two qualities of which he was sure Rousseau knew nothing, because "les méchants ne sont jamais ni gais ni tendres." # Voltaire criticized the "Trois Epitres" of Rousseau as being very poorly written. He claimed this would have been his honest judgment, even if Rousseau had been his closest friend. Voltaire stated that in the very worst of them he had discussed comedy and given rules for

Quoted from Volume II Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

an art which he in no way understood. Voltaire believed that the very best answer one could give to this writer would be a comedy written in the very style which the latter condemned.

Later, Voltaire explained why he had so harshly criticized Rousseau. He began by saying he would have liked to suppress some of his works which had been inspired by his youth and which the reason of advanced years and ideas condemned. He would have preferred withdrawing even the verses he had written against Rousseau which are found in his "Epitre sur la calomnie," because he disliked writing against anyone who had made any contribution to French literature. He felt, however, that in answer to some of the outrageous insults of this writer he was forced to speak. Rousseau had attacked all the men of letters of his time who had any reputation. According to Voltaire, his satires were not, like those of Boileau, criticisms of poorly written works, but they were personal insults. Voltaire objected to such expressions as "bélitre", "maroufle", "louve", and "chien", which he claimed were constantly used by Rousseau in his criticisms. He said these merely brought dishonor to his works, so full of his personal quarrels. Voltaire was certain that every reader who had any sensibilities would object to such procedure. He claimed that

toward the end of his life, Rousseau had attempted to cover up his mistakes, but on visiting Paris in those last days, even then he could not resist the temptation to write satires, which, although not so well written as his earlier works, were none the less bitter and insulting.

The reader may wonder why no mention has been made herein of the conflict between Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). This antagonism did not arise until 1756 with the disaster at Lisbon, three years after the final date treated in this thesis. It is important, however, not to confuse Rousseau the philosopher with Rousseau the poet just considered above. In 1750, Voltaire received a letter from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, after he had attributed to the latter something which he had not written. This letter at the time showed the desire of Rousseau to be friendly with Voltaire. The actual conflict came later. A portion of this letter follows. "Monsieur, un Rousseau (Jean-Baptiste) se déclara autrefois votre ennemi, de peur de se reconnaître votre inférieur; un autre Rousseau, (unknown) ne pouvant approcher du premier par le génie, veut imiter ses mauvais procédés. Il porte le même nom qu'eux; mais, n'ayant ni les talents de l'un, ni la suffisance de l'autre, je suis encore moins capable d'avoir leurs torts envers vous. Je consens bien de vivre inconnu, mais non deshonoré; et je croirais l'être

si j'avais manqué au respect que vous doivent tous les gens de lettres, et qu'ont pour vous tous ceux qui en méritent eux-mêmes.....Je vous proteste donc, monsieur, que non-seulement Rousseau de Genève n'a point tenu les discours que vous lui avez attribués, mais qu'il est incapable d'en tenir de pareils. Je ne me flatte pas de mériter l'honneur d'être connu de vous, mais si jamais ce bonheur m'arrive, ce ne sera, j'espère, que par des endroits dignes de votre estime!#

Throughout the correspondence of this period is found much mention of the writing of history. This is natural, of course, for Voltaire did write the famous "Siècle de Louis XIV." He criticized the current method of writing history, and said that people usually considered history as merely the chronological compilation of facts. They did not write either as a citizen or a philosopher. He believed that some names should merely be mentioned without detailed discussion. Too much stress had been placed upon the superfluous characters, material which neither instructs, pleases or does any particular good. The chronological succession of kings should merely act as a guide to other important considerations. He claimed that most historians sacrificed the human race to a single man. History should contain no satire, no prejudice, no false sense of refinement, but rather, narrate interesting anecdotes which help one to remember the time of which one is writing.

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

In planning the "Siècle de Louis XIV," Voltaire believed that it would take about ten years to complete the work. He preferred this type of work to those which required so much of the imagination so often "tirent l'âme hors d'elle-même," and are "une espèce de passion violente." # He was desirous of writing a history of France in his own way, a history of the nation rather than one of kings. Kings, ministers, and generals were important but so also were customs, laws, and intellect. He hoped that in writing the history of that wonderful century which taught people to think and to speak, he would bring back a desire for a century of serious-minded people who loved art and their country.

Voltaire wrote to Mme. Denis from Berlin, where he was finishing the writing of this work. "Il serait plus rempli de recherches, plus curieux, plus plein, s'il était achevé dans son pays natal; mais il ne serait pas écrit si librement. Je me trouverais le matin avec les jansénistes, le soir avec les molinistes: la préférence m'embarrasserait; au lieu qu'**ici** je jouis de toute mon indifférence et de la plus parfaite impartialité."## He wrote also to an English editor: "I must tell you that I have wrote a History of Louis XIV. You may presume it is written with truth, and not without liberty or freedom. I have been obliged to print

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

it in Berlin at my own expense. I presume four or five hundred copies could sell off well in your country; the two things I have at heart, truth and liberty, being still dear to your countrymen, raise in me that expectation." # Later Voltaire gives his reasons for the success of this famous historical work in a letter to d'Argental. "Les hommes sont nés curieux. Ce livre intéresse leur curiosité à chaque page. Il n'y a pas grand mérite à faire un tel ouvrage, mais il y a du bonheur à choisir un tel sujet.....Tout historien de son pays doit écrire hors de son pays; ce qu'il dit en a plus de vérité et plus de poids." #

Discussing the writing of history, Voltaire recalled the old proverb, "Toutes vérités ne sont pas bonnes à dire." ## He meant that it was unnecessary to mention the truths which have no direct value or importance in connection with the matter in hand. He believed the only history which is suitable is that which should go down to posterity. One should support one's remarks by proof from the memoirs of an eye-witness whenever possible. Voltaire set up two very valuable rules for the writers of history; first, that they should never slander persons; and second, that they should never allow the work to become tedious and boresome.

In the "Siècle de Louis XIV", Voltaire praised the king for having reformed the taste of his court in more than one

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume IV Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

genre. Louis knew how to differentiate between intellect and genius, and personally showed great interest in all the arts. Boileau, Molière, and Racine were protected by him from their enemies. Although Voltaire hoped this work would be destined to become a monument to the glory of Louis XIV, it was not only to be the life of the king, but rather the history of the human mind in the greatest century of progress in intellect.

The famous work was divided into chapters, twenty of which dwelt with history in general. The principal characters were to be in the foreground, however, while the crowd, not to be forgotten, would be in the background, although not unimportant. He failed to use all the details, for he felt that they would be lost in posterity, and, in his opinion, would spoil the work. The characteristics of the century, the causes of the revolution, any of the important events were what he deemed most essential. A chapter on the private life of Louis XIV, the important governmental changes, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a few chapters dealing with the arts, were included. Voltaire believed it necessary only to trace the progress and development of the human intellect in philosophy, poetry, criticism, painting, music, sculpture, and industry. Voltaire thought it useless to make mention of any but those who had shown unusual genius along these lines.

One of the most important topics which has to do with this study of Voltaire and his varied literary interests is his connection with the theatre of his day. It would be practically impossible to catalogue the many different phases of this interest for they were so extremely varied. In reading his correspondence, one is certain to find one thing, however, and that is his decided preference to tragedy.

In his discussion of Racine and Corneille, we find rather conflicting opinions, or changes of opinion concerning these two celebrated writers. It is easy to see that he preferred Racine. At one time Voltaire advised against imitation of Racine for the latter had been desirous of becoming a courtier rather than a famous writer. Voltaire continued by observing that it might be better to follow in the footsteps of Corneille, who tried, even in his old age, to perfect his works. Voltaire stated that the public was ever ready to condemn even those it had always praised, should they produce an inferior play. In spite of these few words in praise of Corneille, Voltaire criticized his last few works as quite unworthy of him and very inferior. Much more praise is found for Racine in the correspondence. Voltaire considered Corneille a "déclamateur". He said that the wisdom of Racine was always eloquent, that he was always the ruler of his heart, and expressed only what was necessary

and in a very correct manner. However, he recognized that it was essential to admire the genius of Corneille, who created tragedy in a century which produced very little culture. Voltaire's famous "Commentaires sur Corneille," in which he gave a very fair estimate of the writer, shows his consideration for Corneille, but one has only to read the letters which refer to the two writers, Corneille and Racine, to notice his preference for the latter.

Voltaire, in all fairness, believed that, rather than to exclude a writer from one's judgment, it is better to have a preference, but to allow for the good in all writers. In the midst of cold reason, there was much of the sublime in Corneille, and Voltaire realized he commanded the respect of all in spite of many faults.

Racine was admired for the tenderness he expressed, and for the beauty of detail shown in his works. He used happy expressions which, according to Voltaire, were the very soul of poetry. Racine displayed all the qualities which formed the basis for the success of any writer. In praising him, Voltaire gave as one reason for his admiration for Racine, the profound interest he had apparently taken in the classic period of literature.

Of the many phases of interest he showed in tragedy, Voltaire seemed quite concerned with one discussion, that of

the love-plot. He said that the day of the conspiracy-plot had evidently passed out of style, unfortunately for the theatre. There was a decided demand for the introduction of love in tragedy. He then decided to write "Zaïre," which treated of love, claiming it to be neither gallant nor French. He said he had tried to depict the Turkish customs as opposed to those of the Christians. It was to contrast honor, birth, patriotism, and religion with the most unfortunate love. He considered his other works better but felt that "Zaïre" was very important and owed its success to its being a treatise which made its appeal through sentiment. Voltaire mentioned "Rome Sauvée," which did not enjoy the success of the other play, but was important, for in it was something that brought back to life ancient Rome.

He wrote to Frederick: "Je suis très-sûr que Rome Sauvée vous plaira davantage, parce que c'est un tableau vrai, une image des temps et des hommes que vous connaissez et que vous aimez. Je m'imagine que ce sujet intéressera bien moins un esprit aussi philosophe que le vôtre. Il arrivera tout le contraire à Paris. Le parterre et les loges ne sont point du tout philosophes, pas même gens de lettres. Ils sont gens à sentiment et puis c'est tout. Une tragédie où l'on dit: "Vraiment voilà qui est beau; Rome est bien peinte; "une telle tragédie, dis-je, est jouée quatre ou cinq

fois." # He believed he had succeeded in making "Rome Sauvée" serve the purpose he had intended, for he wrote: "Je ne dis pas que ma Rome Sauvée fut jouée aussi souvent que Zaïre, mais je crois que, si elle était bien représentée, les Français pourraient se piquer d'aimer Cicéron et César; et je vous avoue que j'ai la faiblesse de penser qu'il y a dans cet ouvrage je ne sais quoi qui ressent l'ancienne Rome." #

In tragedy Voltaire believed that love was very difficult to handle. The important phases should be the tragic and the sublime. The main thing in his opinion was to know how to move others emotionally. In "Sémiramis," he attempted to reproduce all the terror of the Greek theatre, actually changing the French into Athenians. He was delighted to force the happy, frivolous audience to shudder at the sight of a ghost. It was his intention to have "Terreur et pitié, soutenus de la magnificence du spectacle." # Without fear and pity one would have no tragedy. He claimed he had proved this in "Alzire" and "Zaïre," for the spectators had been moved to tears. Whenever one wept at a tragedy its success was supposedly assured.

Of tragedy in general he wrote a considerable amount. He said that for the most part the tragedies since Racine had been written in a cold, barbaric style. To write good

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

tragedy one must put in it his very heart and soul. It required deep meditation, lively enthusiasm, and much patience. It was, according to him, to create, conduct, and bring to an end, an interesting action. Interest was everything, and without it, one had almost nothing; the theatre was not interested in any political discourse, or deep reasoning; interest was paramount. Some plays were not well written because they were filled only with the plot and much too much of it. A play with a surfeit of plot was, in the eyes of Voltaire, like a man overburdened with too much business. Such a play, being merely a stream of ideas, lacked the eloquence which the tragic element of interest would give to them. This was the most important demand of the spectator. Small details never added to the success of writing tragedy. It was very necessary to be severe about exactness of style and elegance of continuity to meet with success in the plays which were to be read only. If a writer found a subject in which he himself was vitally interested, and one which could easily catch the interest of the public, he was more apt to have the ease which is so necessary in writing of tragedy. Another very valuable quality much needed in the writing of good tragedy was that of youthful enthusiasm. Without this element in the play, it was bound to become heavy and uninteresting.

In the eighteenth letter of the "Lettres Anglaises," which concerns the discussion of tragedy, Voltaire gave many of his ideas about the writing of this type of play. To him, the unities were vastly important, for they had been founded by the Greeks, who had really given the world the only plausible foundations for this important genre. This very fact formed the basis for his criticisms of Shakespeare. The passing of time, noted merely by changes of scenes in the course of an hour, allowed the excess of imagination to the point of overcoming judgment.

In mentioning the tragedy of "Hamlet", Voltaire criticized Shakespeare for mixing tragedy and farce. He contended that a play should be either a comedy written to amuse, or a tragedy to arouse the emotions of pity or terror. He believed tragedy was the most dignified of all literary forms. In this letter, he once more mentions the treatment of love, declaring that its place was in comedy rather than in tragedy, unless it was dominant throughout as a terrifying, all-inclusive passion.

Murder on the stage, as in "Julius Caesar", was something new for Voltaire, and he saw in it the possibility of bringing new life to the French drama, which was languishing for lack of that very modification. Voltaire enjoyed seeing Brutus, still holding the bloody sword, assemble the Roman

people to speak to them. He believed that if suicide were permitted in French plays, murder should be allowed as well. In comparing the drama of the two countries, Voltaire claimed that the English were permitted to say anything they wished, while the French were restrained.

In the preface to his play "Oedipe", in 1730, Voltaire answered La Motte, who was attempting to introduce tragedy in prose, as opposed to verse. "... Cet auteur ingénieux et fécond, qui n'a fait que des vers en sa vie, ou des ouvrages de prose à l'occasion de ses vers, écrit contre son art même, et le traite avec le même mépris qu'il a traité Homère, que pourtant il a traduit. Jamais Virgile, ni le Tasse, ni M. Despréaux, ni M. Racine, ni M. Pope, ne se sont avisés d'écrire contre l'harmonie des vers; ni M. de Lulli, contre la musique; ni M. Newton, contre les mathématiques. Il n'y a que trop de personnes qui méprisent la poésie, faute de la connaître. Paris est plein de gens de bon sens, nés avec des organes insensibles à toute harmonie, pour qui de la musique n'est que du bruit, et à qui la poésie ne paraît qu'une folie ingénieuse." #

Voltaire also defended his argument in favor of the unities in this preface to "Oedipe". "... Mais puisque M. de La Motte veut établir des règles toutes contraires à celles qui ont guidé nos grands maîtres, il est juste de

Quoted from "Oeuvres Complètes" (Dido Frères)
(Volume I p. 77)

défendre ces anciennes lois, non parce qu'elles sont anciennes, mais parce qu'elles sont bonnes et nécessaires, et qu'elles pourraient avoir dans un homme de son mérite un adversaire redoutable. ... M. de La Motte veut d'abord proscrire l'unité d'action, de lieu, et de temps. ... Les Français sont les premiers d'entre les nations modernes qui ont fait revivre ces sages règles du théâtre: Aujourd'hui même, en Angleterre, les auteurs affectent d'avertir au-devant de leurs pièces que la durée de l'action est égale à celle de la représentation; et ils vont plus loin que nous, qui en cela avons été leurs maîtres. Toutes les nations commencent à regarder comme barbares les temps où cette pratique était ignorée des plus grands génies, tels que don Lope de Vega et Shakespeare; elles avouent même l'obligation qu'elles nous ont de les avoir retirées de cette barbarie: Quand je n'aurais autre chose à dire à M. de La Motte, sinon que M. M. Corneille, Racine, Molière, Addison, Congrève, Maffei, ont tous observé les lois du théâtre, c'en serait assez pour devoir arrêter quiconque voudrait les violer: mais M. de La Motte mérite qu'on le combatte par des raisons plus que par des autorités." #

Voltaire gave many of his theories concerning the writing of tragedy, in discussing his own plays. One of these

Quoted from "Oeuvres Complètes" (Dido Frères)
(Volume I pp. 75-76)

is the play "Samson", which, Voltaire declared, was not the subject for the ordinary treatment of a love affair. It was better to avoid usage of the same plots simply with different names. He believed the love phase in "Samson" should be used as a means to an end and not an end in itself. He tried to make Samson rather than Dalila the object of interest. He did not permit Dalila to appear in the last act, because the play, or rather the opera, filled as it was with impressive scenes of majesty and terror, should admit love scenes only as an entertaining relief. He advised more music in opera, to avoid recourse to the much over-used recitative, which was only declamation. If this were worthless, Voltaire blamed the poet, for to be effective, recitative must be done with perfection of expression.

In writing "Mérope", Voltaire sought to avoid scenes of reciprocated affection between father and son. This would have caused the play to fail. Every scene should be a combat. It would ruin a play to have a scene in which two people display fear, desire, and love. Common use and the theatre of the day proved that true art is expressed by avoiding such scenes. Voltaire said that a mother and son should not be brought together in a play, unless it were in tragedy to show her desire to kill him, or for a scene of recognition in the last act. The latter was

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket of the car's interior. I shivered slightly, pulling my coat tighter around me. The air was crisp and clear, a welcome change from the stuffy atmosphere of the car. I took a deep breath, savoring the fresh scent of the morning. The sun was just beginning to rise, casting a soft, golden glow over the landscape. The trees were bare, their branches reaching out like skeletal fingers against the pale sky. The ground was covered in a thin layer of frost, glistening in the early light. I walked slowly, my boots crunching on the icy surface. The silence was profound, broken only by the occasional rustle of leaves or the distant chirp of a bird. I felt a sense of peace and solitude, a moment of quiet reflection in the midst of a new day. The world was still so quiet, so still. I could hear the faint hum of the city in the distance, a reminder of the life and activity just beyond this quiet corner of the world. I continued my walk, the cold air filling my lungs. It felt like a cleansing, a renewal. I was alive, and the world was waking up. The first rays of the sun hit my face, warming me from within. I smiled, feeling a sense of hope and possibility. The day was just beginning, and I was ready for whatever it had in store. The cold was no longer a nuisance, but a challenge, a test of my resolve. I would face it, I would overcome it. I would make the most of this moment, this fleeting instant of time. The world was so beautiful, so full of life and color. I was so lucky to be here, to witness this miracle of nature. I would cherish this memory, this feeling of awe and wonder. The day was so full of promise, so full of potential. I was so excited to see what the future held for me. The world was so big, so vast, so full of possibilities. I was so grateful for everything I had, for the love and support of my friends and family. I was so proud of who I was, of the person I had become. The world was so full of beauty, so full of life and color. I was so lucky to be here, to witness this miracle of nature. I would cherish this memory, this feeling of awe and wonder. The day was so full of promise, so full of potential. I was so excited to see what the future held for me. The world was so big, so vast, so full of possibilities. I was so grateful for everything I had, for the love and support of my friends and family. I was so proud of who I was, of the person I had become.

impossible in this play, because of the presence of the tyrant, which would merely create a new danger and completely spoil the plot.

Voltaire wrote two tragedies to which he made allusion many times in his letters. They were "Zulime" and "Mahomet", one of which I have already mentioned above. The former was written with the purpose of expressing the danger of love, an old subject, while the latter was the play written to show the danger of fanaticism, a topic comparatively new at the time. Voltaire judged the latter as the better of the two, but he believed it was not so susceptible to inspire the tender interest that "Zulime" would. In this play he showed that at the height of terror and pity the heroine remained faithful to her criminal lover. Without great conflict of emotions there would be no fine situations, and no really interesting passions could be expressed without great reproach. He preferred to avoid too many scenes with crowds upon the stage, for, he feared to sacrifice the beauties of an impassioned verse by permitting too many scenes of great spectacle in one play.

When he compared these two plays, "Zulime" and "Mahomet", Voltaire said that one scene of the latter was worth all of "Zulime". This was because he believed that in "Zulime" the interest began to wane just when one would expect it to be greater. This is when Zulime learned that her lover had

killed her father whom she had always dearly loved. Her impassioned love seemed to surpass the love for her father, and she showed very little grief because of his death. The end of any tragedy should have the same interest noted in the beginning in order to be successful. According to Voltaire, pathos was another very important element in tragedy writing. It was not enough to depict the truth; one should do it in a strong and touching manner. Warmth was very necessary to prevent boredom on the part of the spectator. Sometimes an added line or even a suitable word was enough to give just such needed warmth of expression.

"Mahomet" was composed for the love of the human race and to attempt to show fanaticism in its most dangerous and horrible phases. Voltaire declared that it was a tragedy more suited to the English than to the French. He said that Paris criticized the play for being too strong and almost too dangerous. He said this was because it had too much truth in it to be appreciated. He made use of the passions and misfortunes of antiquity to instruct his generation. This tragedy was to consist of a declaration of love, of jealousy, and a marriage. Voltaire did not allow his characters to speak of their crimes boldly. He said one should avoid comedy which lifts the tragic mood. He feared that he had failed in this play, for he had not permitted himself the

usual freedom of expression. To be reasonable, according to him, was about the same thing as being cold.

Voltaire wrote: "Je regarde la tragédie et la comédie comme des leçons de vertu, de raison, et de bienséance." #
In these words we read the declaration of a man who had a profound love for and interest in the theatre. More comment has been made by him regarding tragedy than that of any other phase of the drama. That is why it is so important to include this genre in the present treatise. Of comedy, he wrote: "Pour les comédies, je ne m'en mêlerai pas, je ne suis qu'un animal tragique." ##

In the nineteenth letter of the "Lettres Anglaises", Voltaire concerned himself with a discussion of comedy in the theatre. He spoke of Wycherley and of his writing of satires on the society of the time. In imitation of Molière, this author, in the opinion of Voltaire, lacked skill and propriety, so characteristic of the seventeenth century writer, but he was more forceful and hardy. Voltaire believed there was more interest in the plays of Wycherley. He mentioned another writer, Congreve, as the best creator of comedy in England. Although showing a lack of taste in some of his works, they should be characterized by their style and for their psychological reasoning. His plays were always witty and exact. In conclusion, Voltaire declared that, to enjoy

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

English comedy, one must be acquainted with their language, as well as with the country, in order to understand the allusion made to the characteristics and the customs of that great country.

Mention has just been made above of the most famous writer of comedy in the seventeenth century, Molière. (1622-1673) Voltaire often mentioned him, not only in regard to his own works, but to contrast him with those who tried to write comedy in the eighteenth century. He criticized Molière for his choice of subjects which were "trop bas". The majority of spectators preferred more marked traits of characterization. Voltaire believed this impossible in the theatre. In Molière, however, he thought the humor should be stronger, the spirit of the impertinences more impassioned, to be more in keeping with his plots. The critic said that the delicacy which made for the complete charm of conversation had no place in the theatre, and was not suitable. Then, too, he criticized the "dénoûment" of his plots as very poor. He disagreed with the practicability of having the plot carried along merely by the servants, giving to them the humor in their speeches, rather than to the masters, or the main characters of the plays. In spite of what he called the faults of this writer, however, Voltaire placed his works above those of Plautus and Terence.

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In writing a criticism of Marivaux (1688-1763), another writer of comedy, Voltaire said he considered him a man of uprightness and of intellect. In his works, Voltaire claimed he could read his own ideas and sentiments of philosophy, humanity, and independence. His style was criticized as a bit too "recherché", and Voltaire wished that Marivaux had chosen more noble subjects. The introduction of allegorical characters into so-called metaphysical comedies, characters which were not natural, seemed out of place on the stage, where Voltaire believed that everything should be life-like. Marivaux should have made more real the actual affairs of the heart, and should not have developed in such detail the passions. The wit of Marivaux was much admired by Voltaire, but he would have preferred him to have been more sparing with it. A character in comedy should be witty, without knowing that he is so, or without having to think about it constantly. This, according to Voltaire, marks the difference between comedy and dialogue.

Another contemporary of Voltaire was Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon (1674-1762), who would be considered important in this kind of discussion. However, during the period with which we are concerned, not much mention is found in the

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correspondence with regard to this writer. Voltaire's actual criticism came later, although a student of the literature is not unfamiliar with the rivalry between these two playwrights. Voltaire believed Crébillon quite inferior, and in many respects, we know this to be true. The critic wrote: "On ne s'acharne point contre Crébillon, en disant ainsi, avec tout le monde, que ce qui est mauvais est mauvais. On lui rend justice, comme quand on loue les très-belles choses dans Électre et dans Rhadamiste". #

Many of Voltaire's observations concerning Crébillon are found in letters to Frederick. All these criticisms have about the same tenor. When he sent to the king his own play, "Catilina", he wrote: "en voici le premier acte; peut-être a-t-il été fait trop vite. J'ai fait en huit jours ce que Crébillon avait mis vingt-huit ans à achever; je ne me croyais pas capable d'une si épouvantable diligence; mais j'étais ici sans mes livres. Je me souvenais de ce que Votre Majesté m'avait écrit sur le Catilina de mon confrère; elle avait trouvé mauvais, avec raison, que l'histoire romaine y fut entièrement corrompue; elle trouvait qu'on avait fait jouer à Catilina le rôle d'un bandit extravagant, et à Cicéron celui d'un imbécile. Je me suis souvenu de vos critiques très-justes; vos bontés

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

polies pour mon vieux confrère ne vous avaient pas empêché d'être un peu indigne qu'on eût fait un tableau si peu ressemblant de la république romaine." #

Later, when "Catilina" had had some success, Voltaire wrote to Mme. Denis: "Le Catilina de Crébillon a eu une vingtaine de représentations, dites-vous; c'est précisément par cette raison que le mien n'en aurait guère. Votre parterre aime la nouveauté. On irait deux ou trois fois pour comparer et pour juger, et puis on serait las de Cicéron et de sa république romaine. On a souffert les vers énigmatiques et visgoths du Catilina de Crébillon. Ils sont sifflés aujourd'hui, oui; mais au théâtre ils ont passé. Les jours d'une première représentation sont de vraies assemblées de peuple, on ne sait jamais si on couronnera son homme ou si on le lapidera." #

Voltaire liked to have things well done. He said that some plays would live because of the interest and curiosity they inspired, even though badly written. Satires in prose or in verse were very often so poorly written that he did not like them. He predicted that the theatre in Europe would lose the superiority it was having in his day. He felt that comedies would be replaced by bourgeois tragedies, devoid of the real harmony of real verse. He wished comedy to continue with the infusion of more interest. This had

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

4. The number of non-zero elements in the matrix is 10.

been attempted many times, and he commented favorably upon "Le Glorieux", a play of Destouches, in which were mingled real comedy and true sentiment. To the critic, this was a true painting of civil life.

When Voltaire produced the plays "Marianne" and "L'Indiscret", he was disappointed because only the well educated people seemed to enjoy them. He claimed that Legrand, Daucourt, and others had produced vulgar comedy so long, that one which dealt with respected customs could not be wholly appreciated.

The art of writing and that of judging were, in the eyes of this famous critic, quite different and very difficult. Voltaire believed the more one knew art, the more one felt its thorns. He always advised against hasty judgments, believing it better to wait until one is sure, before condemning a writer. He mentioned the trouble experienced by writers in regard to the careless printing of their works. "Je n'ai d'enfants que mes pauvres ouvrages, et je suis fâché de les voir mutiler si impitoyablement. Le sort d'un homme de lettres et le triste honneur d'être célèbre à Paris sont environnés de trop de désagréments. Trop d'avilissement est attaché à cet état équivoque, qui aux yeux de ceux qui ont un établissement, est exposé à l'envie de ceux qui n'en ont pas." #

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

The first of these is the fact that the system is not
 self-sufficient. It is dependent on the state for
 the supply of raw materials and for the disposal
 of its waste. This is a serious disadvantage.

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 of its waste. This is a serious disadvantage.

Of course we know many instances where Voltaire did not show very good taste himself, in either his literary or social manners, but in judging tragedy and poetry, he was strict in his criticism of lack of taste, or departure from the fixed traditions in form. The influence of Racine and Boileau is most noticed in his criticism of others. In spite of what he said about hasty criticism of writers, he often violated his own ideas, and severely criticized a writer, before giving much thought to the works. This was his procedure in dealing with his literary enemies, such as Rousseau and Desfontaines.

Voltaire stated that some writers sought protection from ignorant people, in order to avoid those who were better able to judge their works. They wished to lose rivals, rather than to excel them. Usually, one who showed talent had enemies in those very people who could judge them well, and who should have been their friends. Voltaire was usually sincere in his criticism, not desiring to flatter merely for self-aggrandizement. He avoided precipitated judgments, but did not fear to designate the faults he found in a work. Many times he gave due credit to a writer in spite of his faults, commending him for perfection in style. He once said that a true man of letters was always in danger of unfair criticism. He mentioned Pope who had experienced this same

The first of these is the fact that the
 of the world is not a uniform one, but
 is a complex of many different parts,
 each of which has its own life and
 its own history. The second is the fact
 that the world is not a static one, but
 is a dynamic one, in which things are
 constantly changing and growing. The
 third is the fact that the world is not
 a simple one, but is a complex one,
 in which many different things are
 going on at the same time. The fourth
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 is a dynamic one, in which things are
 constantly changing and growing. The
 ninth is the fact that the world is not
 a simple one, but is a complex one,
 in which many different things are
 going on at the same time. The tenth
 is the fact that the world is not a
 uniform one, but is a complex one,
 in which many different things are
 going on at the same time.

treatment, as quoted above, but who was able to defend himself by his own cleverness. It was the contention of Voltaire that in the world of letters, that "champ de dispute", there would always be continual warfare, where one should be armed, when one would rather seek peace. In one of his letters, he wrote: "Il est impossible qu'un homme de lettres qui a pensé librement, et qui passe pour être heureux, ne soit pas persecuté en France. La fureur publique poursuit toujours un homme public qu'on n'a pu rendre infortuné." And in the same vein, he continued: "Les poètes et les écrivains du quatrième étage se vengent de leur misère et de leur honte en clabaudant contre ceux qu'ils croient heureux et célèbres. Quand je ferais afficher que je ne suis point heureux, cela ne les apaiserait pas encore." #

Letters twenty and twenty-three of the "Lettres Anglaises" are concerned with the subject of literary criticism. Here, Voltaire thought more honor was given to literature and to men of letters in England than in France. This was so because more profound thinking was done there, and authors felt free to publish their works. In England a man of considerable merit could really become famous, according to Voltaire. He quoted as examples of these men of merit, Addison, who became secretary of State, Newton, who was

Quoted from Volume V Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

comptroller of the national currency, Pope, who was very handsomely reimbursed for his translation of Homer, and Prior and Swift, who both held quite important positions. Voltaire stated that one did not permit criticism in England against works, while, on the other hand, in France, criticism was rather exaggerated or even misunderstood.

He felt that the nation as a whole had no outstanding intelligence. The old writers, Corneille and Racine, Molière, La Bruyère, Bossuet, Fénelon, and others, had not been able to establish universal reasoning. In the works of all these men, the dominant characteristic had not been the treating of deep philosophical subjects. Voltaire observed that when one writes as a philosopher and thinks not only for himself, but for the public, he should acquire a force of genius, placing him high above the other men of his day.

It was difficult, in the opinion of Voltaire, to give the works the "Tour piquant" which would almost force people to read them in spite of themselves. A sensible and instructive work would last longer, and go on to posterity, while the small, insignificant novel would be easily forgotten. He considered that the products of a writer who was imperfect, verbose, faulty, and superstitious, would enjoy longer duration, if, in the depths of his writings, were

The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the
theoretical aspects of the problem. It is shown that the
problem is equivalent to a problem in the theory of
differential equations. The second part of the paper is devoted
to a discussion of the numerical aspects of the problem.
It is shown that the problem can be solved by the method
of finite differences. The third part of the paper is devoted
to a discussion of the results of the calculations. It is shown
that the results are in good agreement with the theoretical
results. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a
discussion of the conclusions. It is shown that the
conclusions are in good agreement with the theoretical
conclusions. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a
discussion of the references. It is shown that the
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references. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a
discussion of the acknowledgments. It is shown that the
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acknowledgments. The seventh part of the paper is devoted
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appendix is in good agreement with the theoretical
appendix. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a
discussion of the bibliography. It is shown that the
bibliography is in good agreement with the theoretical
bibliography. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a
discussion of the index. It is shown that the index is in
good agreement with the theoretical index. The tenth part
of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the conclusion.
It is shown that the conclusion is in good agreement with
the theoretical conclusion.

found something really solid and worth while. Simply a recital of good fortune, a story lacking in continuity, without any particular plot, almost invariably left no permanent impression, and, for that reason, would soon pass into oblivion or be discarded as quite worthless.

The two most difficult moods to express were, according to Voltaire, humor and affection. He claimed, however, that because these moods were contained in nature, art was able to and should express them. Whenever a work was begun with a familiar tone, it would be spoiled by heroic verse, unless great care were taken in the manner of introducing this opposing characteristic. True skill, therefore, could be shown in passing from one to another, descending with delicate shades. If a writing were always profound, it would be boring and would become merely declamatory and very uninteresting. One had to change the picture, -- variety, the sincere, naive painting of mood, the agreeable, -- all were important steps which had to be constantly before the eyes of the artist.

Much consideration has been given to style in the letters of Voltaire. He observed that a glossy and constrained style, found for more than fifty years in nearly all writing, was the mark of falsity, and had, in

addition, the characteristic of servitude which he despised. He preferred freedom and true expression. The French always appreciated interest and charm. Without these qualities, beauty was not beauty. Voltaire praised the works which had precision, force, a natural and nappy style. With it all, of course, should be a certain depth of feeling.

When parodies began to thrive, and Scarron's famous one of Virgil's classic, "L'Enéide travestie" appeared, Voltaire was furious, saying that certainly no Roman could ever have written such a thing. Augustus, Octavius, Virgil, all three, would have been quite indignant with this genre. He was disgusted with the grossness and the ridicule which had entered the field of literature at that time. We know also that Fougere de Monbron had published his travesty on the "Henriade". This may have directly influenced Voltaire's condemnation of the genre. The critic mentioned the style prevalent in his day. Writers were seeking new phrases only because they lacked ideas. Except for Fontenelle, all the writers of his day lacked genius, and, according to him, "ils dansent toujours parce qu'ils ne peuvent marcher droit." #

Quoted from Volume III Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

If the subject were not interesting, Voltaire believed that all the verse of Virgil, the lights and reasoning of Corneille, would not have made the work successful. One must be precise, instead of wandering. He wrote: "Pourquoi étendre en tant de vers ce qu'Horace et Despréaux ont dit en dix ou douze lignes connues de tout le monde?" #

One should always have the subject foremost in mind. It would be better to keep the natural and simple style, not requiring too much of the attention of the reader. A writer must avoid the many ideas which might present themselves to a superior minded person so rilling the work as to create an unnatural style. In giving advice to one of his friends, Cideville, Voltaire argued on this very idea: "Comptez que vous tuez votre enfant en le caressant trop. Encore une fois, plus de simplicité --- allez vite au but, ne dites que le nécessaire, --- en arrachant une infinité de fleurs que vous avez laissées croître, sans y penser, autour de l'arbre que vous plantiez, il n'en croîtra que mieux et n'en sera que plus beau." ##

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

Quoted from Volume IV Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

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THE DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

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Summary

In this thesis I have traced Voltaire's ideas about literature and criticism as found in his letters, written between the years 1711 and 1753. During this period, he showed his regard for the traditions of the classic period, his criticisms of the early French writers as well as some of his contemporaries. So very interspersed and so numerous were the letters in which Voltaire mentioned Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, one of his bitterest enemies, that it seemed necessary to treat this topic under a special division in the discussion. His ideas concerning authors and their works were handled separately in regard to history, the theatre, and for the general discussion of prose, poetry, and style.

Mention was made of his ideas and criticism not only in France but in England where he was so greatly influenced. In the latter connection, a somewhat brief reference has been made to the "Lettres Anglaises", as well as to his own personal letters. By including a discussion of the correspondence of Voltaire and Frederick the Great of Prussia, his interest in that country has also been shown.

In summarizing this discussion, it is fitting to make some comment upon Voltaire, as he appears to one who has made a fairly detailed study of one period of his life, as seen through his numerous personal letters. One realizes

TO THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF THE
TREASURY, WASHINGTON, D. C.
SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed amendment to the National Bank Act, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, very truly,
J. M. [Signature]

that Voltaire was a man who wrote somewhat carefully, what he thought, but absolutely without fear or reservation. For him, it was not a profession, not solely his pleasure, not in particular his love for glory, but he wrote to express the very deepest feelings of his soul. One reads in his writing a wide and sincere curiosity, a receptive ability, which was most intellectual, an inclination to be just and candid, and a vigorous, extended mastery over a wide field in the art of expression. He showed a vast knowledge and the alert readiness to increase and broaden his expansive knowledge and to impart it to the waiting public.

Voltaire said that nature has given us so few doors through which pleasure may enter, that it would be a shame to open only one of them. If any man ever opened practically all the doors of possible interests, he did. His works, including the vast correspondence, are quite filled with the wonderful, spontaneous interest which was his. With it all came the ability to express himself clearly even in the most difficult subjects. One must concede him to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest intellectual power of his generation. Typically French in his expression, we find clearness, vivacity, grace, charm, a certain amount of good French humor and satire in his writings. His originality probably comes from the instinct of curiosity, so typically Voltaire's.

and the other two, the first of which is the most important, are the two most important factors in the determination of the rate of growth of the economy. The first of these is the rate of growth of the population, and the second is the rate of growth of the capital stock.

The rate of growth of the population is determined by the rate of growth of the birth rate, and the rate of growth of the capital stock is determined by the rate of growth of the investment rate.

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Much can be said, however, on the other side. It is not wrong to admit that there were two Voltaires, one, the peerless poet and philosopher, hating show and pretense, fighting always for liberty; the other, covetous, quibbling, spiteful, and greedy. He had many enemies, but often it could have been avoided had he not allowed his great ego to display itself. He wrote: "Je n'ai donc avancé qu'une vérité et même une vérité utile pour les belles-lettres; et c'est parce qu'elle est vérité qu'elle m'attire des injures." # Voltaire, so satirical himself at times, declared that he detested satire in the writings of others. He calls this the language of the envious. Many times, according to him, one's work is ruined by jealousy, which he calls the poison of literature, and still, it is the very quality which he displayed in so many instances.

One could not call Voltaire a coward. As we see so often, he had the courage of his convictions and criticized even his own government when he thought that it was not in the right. His criticism is a bit too pungent at times, and goes beyond what we might regard today as the normal bounds. He showed his lack of reverence in his letters. One suspects the sneer often in spite of the appearance of gravity in his writing. His means of defense was satire,

Quoted from Volume I Correspondance (Moland Ed.)

the very thing he so often condemned, this weapon of scathing mockery and wit. He lacked at times the depth of imagination and feeling, but he never was willing to admit he could gain much for himself by taking the best from the works of another.

Today the plays of Voltaire would be severely judged inferior to the plays of either Corneille or Racine in quality and style. They lack a certain grandeur and force, which so permeate the plays of these men. He imitates them to the extent of limiting the tragic interest to a crisis, built up from the conflict of emotions. Melodrama, at first so displeasing to Voltaire, was later accepted and even introduced into his own plays. He had read Shakespeare and had seen his plays performed, and this influence was bound to have its effect, and to cause his plays to deviate from the actual plan of the classics. In spite of this, however, one sees very clearly throughout his plays a decided predominance of the classic style. He attempted to give more vivacity to his plays, for he loved the "coups de théâtre", which were able to hold the curiosity and the interest of the audience.

His comedies were not successful. This we know, not only when we read the comments of other critics, but also, by reading these plays and comparing them with the comedies

of other famous French writers, for instance, Molière, and Marivaux. John Morley, in his interesting study of Voltaire, gives an excellent criticism or comment upon this aspect of his writings. Morley wrote: "Voltaire entered too eagerly into the interests of the world, was by temperament too exclusively sympathetic and receptive and social to place himself even in imagination thus outside of the common circle. Without capacity for this, no comedy of the first order. Without serious consciousness of contrasts, no humor that endures." #

In regard to his correspondence, a few words are added in conclusion. Even the shortest notes, hastily written, are often veritable masterpieces. One might even say he wrote his best in his letters. He expressed in a clear, precise manner, and with a great deal of simplicity, his very frank opinions. In other words, he gave a most complete picture of the ever progressing ideas of his vast intellect. His style is natural and easy and would be difficult to surpass.

It would be most difficult to judge the nature of the genius of Voltaire. Critics differ in their many and varied opinions. It is certain, however, to anyone who reads his writings, that his intelligence was more extensive and clear than it was original. He did not offer any real innovations

Quoted from p. 141 John Morley: Voltaire (Chap. 3)

in any genre. This is quite apparent after one has read the works of some other writers, dealt with in his correspondence. What he did possess, however, in a very positive way, was that quality of curiosity, mentioned before, and which was ever on the alert. Voltaire had the ability to popularize. We see in him three aspects of French genius, according to many critics,--universality, vivacity, and precision. He might be called the personification of what the eighteenth century termed "l'Esprit",--a mixture of nerve, irony, roguishness, or even spite. This quality adds more charm to his lighter works and is the very spice of the more serious ones.

It is very difficult for me to agree with some of the criticisms I have read, which state that he represents the most qualified of French genius. Even when all the indecent remarks have been cut from his writings, remarks which at times show why he was in hot water most of the time, the hateful, personal controversies, which could have been handled more tactfully, rather than the way in which he chose to do it, one cannot very well classify works which show these tendencies, among the permanent masterpieces of literature. That accounts for the fact, perhaps, that so many of his works have already passed into oblivion. Not only the

plays of Corneille and Racine, but most of the comedies of Molière stand above the writings of Voltaire, in the consideration of most of us today. Nevertheless, Voltaire remains the most complete representative of the eighteenth century, and one of the most successful writers of French literature.

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The first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear. The second is that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear. The third is that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear.

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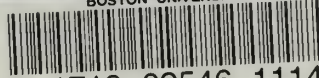
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